Zimbabwe
DIEM – Data in Emergencies
Monitoring brief, round 7
Results and recommendations
June 2023
Key highlights

> The survey was conducted towards the end of the lean season and the beginning of the early harvest for main cereals (March through April 2023).

> While income security shows improvements, most households have only one income source and 5 percent reported no income source at all in the three months preceding the survey.

> The prevalence of household shocks went down from 46 percent in the last round to 43 percent. The major shocks included drought/heat stress (13 percent), sickness, accident or death of a household member (10 percent) and flood/riverbank erosion (10 percent).

> There was an increase in crop production with 61 percent of crop producers planting the same or more area than a typical year. However, Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central provinces had a high number of farmers reporting a drop in area planted even though these are, traditionally, high cereal producing provinces.

> Livestock (poultry, cattle and goats) production was on the increase, but the sector is suffering from diseases and death (78 percent, up from 62 percent in the last round), and output marketing challenges like low prices and fewer fair marketing opportunities.

> Sixty-two percent of households scored “0” (no hunger) on the household hunger score (HHS) but the majority of households (38 percent) were employing emergency livelihood coping strategies.

> About 93 percent of households reported the need for agricultural assistance in the coming three to six months.

> In light of the increased crop production, it is recommended that investment is made in harvest and post-harvest technologies that limit food loss.

> Early warning systems and anticipatory actions should be strengthened to increase resilience to emerging shocks.

> Livestock productivity programmes should focus on fair output markets particularly in the poultry sub-sector.
Methodology

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched a household survey in Zimbabwe through the Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) System to monitor agricultural livelihoods and food security. This seventh-round survey reached 1,686 households, representative at administrative 1 level (provincial). The survey targeted eight out of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe, excluding Bulawayo and Harare.

Interviews for this seventh-round survey were conducted between 3 March and 8 April 2023 through computer-assisted telephone interviews. At the provincial level, 160 agricultural households were targeted. Quotas were set following the proportion observed in the population, which resulted in 171–221 agricultural households per province. Variable targets for non-agricultural households were set following the proportion observed in the population, which resulted in 14–40 non-agricultural households per province.

The fourth-round survey was conducted between 29 March and 11 May 2022, the fifth-round survey between 3 and 26 September 2022, and the sixth-round survey between 27 November and 30 December 2022. These three rounds have been drawn from to make comparisons throughout this brief.

Figure 1. Countries with established DIEM-Monitoring Systems


The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined. The dotted line represents, approximately, the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.
About DIEM-Monitoring

FAO established the DIEM-Monitoring System to collect, analyse and disseminate data on shocks and livelihoods in countries prone to multiple shocks. DIEM-Monitoring aims to inform decision making by providing regularly updated information on how different shocks are affecting the livelihoods and food security of agricultural populations.

At the core of the DIEM-Monitoring System are country-level dashboards. Readers are encouraged to explore these dashboards to gain more insight into the context of Zimbabwe and other countries.

Learn more at data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/monitoring

Income and shocks

About 5 percent of surveyed households reported no main income. Fifty-seven percent of households, down from 65 percent since the last round, reported no second income, and 72 percent, down from 78 percent, reported no third income. About 50 percent reported a decrease in their main income source (Figure 2), 41 percent reported a decrease in their second income and 31 percent reported a decrease in their third income.

Figure 2. Households reporting a drop in main source of income (by province)
Animal diseases were the predominant agricultural shock across the country. Forty-three percent of surveyed households reported that they were not impacted by any shock in the three months preceding the survey, down from 46 percent in the last round (Figure 3). The main shocks reported were drought/heat stress (13 percent, up from 7 percent in the last round), followed by sickness, accident or death of a household member (10 percent, down from 19 percent in the last round) and flood/riverbank erosion (10 percent, up from 7 percent in the last round).

Figure 3. Main shocks reported (percentage of households)

Crops

Figure 4. Zimbabwe agricultural calendar

The survey was conducted during the main cropping season. The main irrigation source for crops was rainfed (84 percent). The main crops produced included maize (74 percent), sorghum (5 percent) and groundnuts (3 percent), replacing tomatoes which held the third position last round. The majority of farmers (30 percent) reported that they planted the same area as in a typical year, while 26 percent said they planted slightly more, 25 percent said they planted slightly less, 6 percent planted a lot more and 14 percent planted a lot less. Overall, 61 percent planted the same or more area than in a typical year. Between 40 and 60 percent of farmers in Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central provinces reported a drop in area planted (Figure 5).
Sixty-six percent of crop producers reported facing crop production difficulties. The main production difficulties faced by producers included poor access to fertilizer (29 percent), not enough irrigation water or rainfall (26 percent) and too much irrigation/water (21 percent). Regionally, the predominant difficulties in crop production in the Matabeleland provinces were pest outbreaks, while in the rest of the country the main difficulty was access to fertilizer (Figure 6).
About 45 percent of crop producers reported facing difficulties selling their crops. The majority (34 percent) reported low selling prices as the main difficulty selling crops (Figure 7). Mashonaland Central and Masvingo provinces had the highest number of farmers reporting a drop in main crop price (40–60 percent), while Mashonaland East had the least (20–40 percent).
Livestock

The main livestock produced included poultry (55 percent), cattle (22 percent) and goats (18 percent). About 58 percent (down from 63 percent in the last round) of livestock producers faced difficulties in the three months preceding the survey. Livestock production has been affected by diseases and death (78 percent, up from 62 percent in the last round), difficulty purchasing feed (11 percent, down from 14 percent), access to veterinary services (6 percent, down from 12 percent) and access to pasture (4 percent, down from 10 percent) (Figure 8).

About 48 percent (up from 42 percent in the last round) of livestock producers faced difficulties selling their livestock and livestock products. The main sales difficulties encountered by producers were low selling prices (31 percent), lack of demand from usual buyers (30 percent) and payment delays (28 percent).
Figure 8. Main livestock production difficulties (percentage of livestock producers)

- **Livestock diseases or injury**
  - Round 4: 78%
  - Round 5: 78%
  - Round 6: 69%
  - Round 7: 62%

- **Purchasing feed**
  - Round 4: 10%
  - Round 5: 12%
  - Round 6: 14%
  - Round 7: 11%

- **Access to veterinary inputs**
  - Round 4: 6%
  - Round 5: 10%
  - Round 6: 6%
  - Round 7: 6%

- **Access to veterinary services**
  - Round 4: 9%
  - Round 5: 8%
  - Round 6: 12%
  - Round 7: 5%

- **Access to pasture**
  - Round 4: 13%
  - Round 5: 10%
  - Round 6: 12%
  - Round 7: 4%

- **Access to water**
  - Round 4: 3%
  - Round 5: 8%
  - Round 6: 8%
  - Round 7: 3%

- **Livestock theft/insecurity**
  - Round 4: 2%
  - Round 5: 3%
  - Round 6: 8%
  - Round 7: 2%

- **Access to livestock markets to buy young animals**
  - Round 4: 1%
  - Round 5: 1%
  - Round 6: 2%
  - Round 7: 1%


**Food security**

The survey was conducted during the lean season. About 31 percent of households ran out of food in the 30 days preceding the survey, while 24 percent of households reported being hungry but could not eat, and 14 percent could not eat for a whole day.

According to the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FiES),\(^1\) about 4 percent of the surveyed households indicated a prevalence of severe food insecurity while a combined 48 percent experienced moderate to severe food insecurity in the four weeks preceding the survey.

HHS indicates that the majority (62 percent) had a score of “0”, meaning they were facing little to no hunger; 14 percent had a score of “1”, indicating slight hunger; a combined 20 percent had a score of “2” or “3”, meaning moderate hunger; and another 5 percent had a score of “4”, “5” or “6” indicative of severe hunger.

\(^1\) FiES results are subject to change, until the country scale is established for a more consistent comparability across rounds.
The majority (62 percent, up from 57 percent in the last round) of households had high dietary diversity, measured with the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS), while 32 percent had medium dietary diversity and 7 percent had low dietary diversity (Figure 9). According to the livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI), the majority of households (38 percent, up from 33 percent in last round) were using emergency strategies, followed by crisis (30 percent, up from 16 percent) and stress (11 percent, down from 22 percent). Twenty-one percent did not employ any coping strategies, down from 30 percent in the previous round.

Figure 9. Food security indicators

About 93 percent of surveyed households reported the need for assistance in the coming three to six months. Mashonaland Central and Manicaland provinces had the highest proportion (> 95 percent) of households requiring support. The main needs included inputs for crop and vegetable production (48 percent, down from 52 percent last round), livestock feed (47 percent, up from 25 percent) and veterinary services (24 percent, up from 8 percent).

In the three months preceding the survey, the majority (80 percent) of households had not received any assistance. For the households that had received assistance, the government provided the majority (59 percent), followed by non-governmental organizations (21 percent), other United Nations agencies (12 percent) and the World Food Programme (8 percent).
Recommendations

Short-term recommendations

Income and shocks

- Support cash-transfers to food insecure households as an alternative to traditional food distributions across all provinces.
- Strengthen drought and flood early warning on dry spells, excessive rainfall, etc. Protect agricultural assets and livelihoods through anticipatory action in the rainy season across the entire country.

Crops

- Considering the expected good harvest, focus on harvesting and post-harvesting technologies that limit food loss.

Livestock

- Double efforts in livestock disease surveillance as they are prevalent across the whole country.

Food security

- Provide a combination of cash transfers, and both cash and voucher assistance in preparation for the next farming season to households that faced hunger during this round, and may have exhausted their assets trying to cope, mostly in Masvingo and Mashonaland Central.

Long-term recommendations

Income and shocks

- The humanitarian sector should continue strengthening income security with community-based programming that focuses on diversifying income to reduce the number of households with only one income source.
Crops

> Support and protect the input market, particularly fertilizer, from external shocks, like the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, through local production and participation in regional aggregation initiatives.

> Strengthen the revived National Early Warning Unit (agriculture) to provide farmers with timely information about the cropping season so that they proactively face upcoming challenges.

Livestock

> Focus on fair markets, especially in the poultry sub-sector, to ensure prices are regulated and benefit the seller as well.

> Strengthen veterinary services in light of the prevalence of animal diseases.

Food security

> Increase the rate of adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture in order to curb climatic challenges, and ensure food availability during droughts or floods.